From: EIR Compliance

To:

Subject: 20260210 -EIR

Date: 10 February 2026 15:00:43

Reference Number: **EIR**

Dear

We refer to your request for information submitted to Yorkshire Water dated 13 January 2026:

"Please provide the following environmental information:

1. *The average annual tonnage of sewage sludge (biosolids) supplied for agricultural use for each of the last three years (please specify whether figures relate to calendar or financial years).*
2. *The current price, pricing mechanism, or charging structure per tonne for sewage sludge supplied for agricultural use (summary, indicative, or banded figures are acceptable).*
3. *The parameters for which sewage sludge is tested prior to being supplied for agricultural use, including chemical, biological, and physical parameters.*
4. *The frequency at which the above-mentioned testing is undertaken.*
5. *A summary of any measures implemented, policies adopted, or changes made following the Environment Agency's 2017 report on sewage sludge and land application, particularly in relation to contaminants such as PFAS ("forever chemicals") and microplastics."*

Please find attached our response to your request:

1. **Question 1 response:**

This information is publicly available via our Annual Performance Reports (APR) returns: https://www.yorkshirewater.com/about-us/reports/, please refer to, table 8D.11. For ease of reference we have included theses below.

2025/26 is not currently available as we are part way through the reporting year however the audited figures for the previous three years are:

2022/23: 75,106 Tonnes Dry Solids representing 93.7% of sludge disposed

2023/24: 72,694 Tonnes Dry Solids representing 98.6% of sludge disposed

2024/25: 82,490 Tonnes Dry Solids representing 96.8% of sludge disposed

With regard to the information requested for the data for 2025/2026. For the purposes of paragraph 12(4)(d), a public authority may refuse to disclose information to the extent that the request relates to material, which is still in the course of completion, to unfinished documents or to incomplete data. We can confirm that the 2025/26 data is incomplete. Whilst we understand that it would be beneficial to obtain this data year to date, we have also considered whether it would be in the wider public interest to disclose the information. When weighed against the presumption in favour of disclosure, for the purposes of transparency and accountability, there may be some public interest in providing the data. However, we also have to take into consideration arguments for preventing disclosure. Information in relation to the 2025/26 data is incomplete and is still being collected. Once this information is complete, it will be published in our annual performance report and be available to access via the link and table above.

2. **Question 2 response:**

We engage with the recycling market with biosolids material based on an overall balance of cost, environmental impact and revenue generation through the sale of biosolids. This is balanced on the best overall outcome across these three categories, remaining in line with our regulatory compliance and reducing the overall impact of cost for the customer whilst using of the product safely. This contributes towards achieving our sludge treatment and disposal strategy for the AMP. We currently do this on a cost per tonne sale price, balancing the cost and revenue across the region based on market demand. This reduces the bill paid by YW customers, whilst delivering the benefits of nutrient recycling.

3. **Question 3 response:**

Sewage sludge in tested in line with the requirements of the Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations 1989, schedule 1.

- pH
- the percentage content of dry matter, organic matter, nitrogen and phosphorus; and
- the concentration in milligrams per kilogram of dry matter of–
- Fluoride
- Mercury
- Arsenic
- Cadmium
- Chromium
- Copper

- Lead
- Molybdenum
- Nickel
- Zinc
- Magnesium
- Phosphorus (total)
- Potassium
- Sulphur
- Selenium

In addition to the core requirement of the above legislation, we recycle sewage sludge in accordance with the Industry voluntary Safe Sludge Matrix and the Industry Biosolids Assurance Scheme (BAS) as such we also monitor for E.coli.

4. **Question 4 response:**

The minimum frequency for testing of Biosolids as set out in the Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations 1989 is at intervals not more than 6 months however we test anything quarterly.

5. **Question 5 response:**

Using bioresources as a fertiliser is a long-established and independently regulated process that provides a useful source of nutrients for farming. The use of bioresources saves farmers money and decreases their reliance on chemical fertilisers. Although there are some concerns that some bioresources may contain contaminants, such as microplastics and forever chemicals (PFAS), there are no legal standards for them and, in some cases, no agreed assessment techniques. Any standards and techniques are a

matter for the government and the regulator and need to be based on firm evidence and detailed scientific research.

Yorkshire Water, through the Chemical Investigations Programme (CIP), has been investigating PFOS and PFOA since 2015. The CIP is steered by water companies, the Environment Agency, Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru/Natural Resources Wales, Defra, and Ofwat. From 2020 a wider range of PFAS has been included in the CIP, investigated in sewage, final effluent, bioresources, groundwater, surface water and soil. All results are freely available through the CIP tool on the UK Water Industry Research (UKWIR) website at https://ukwir.org/water-chemicals-investigation-programme. Completed investigation reports and brief descriptions of ongoing investigations (résumés) are freely available at https://ukwir.org/home-of-water-industry-research-projects-reports-tools.

Yorkshire Water is co-steering another UKWIR investigation outside of CIP4, 'Potential impact of PFAS in Biosolids upon agricultural crops'. The movement of 40 PFAS from biosolids-amended soil into rye grass, winter wheat, and beet is being investigated with the report due to be published in spring 2027.

We trust that the provision of this data satisfies your request. In accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, if you are not satisfied with this reply to your request you can ask for an internal review. A request for an internal review must be submitted within 40 working days by contacting the Data Protection Team.

Thank you for contacting Yorkshire Water.

Yours sincerely,

Data Protection Team

Email: EIR@Yorkshirewater.co.uk